

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANKARA 01878 071557Z

73

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 SAM-01

OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-03 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 XMB-02 /103 W
----- 069934

R 071426Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8257

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO UNN

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 1878

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: ENRG, BE, IR, TU

SUBJECT: STRONG GOT INTEREST IN TURKISH-IRANIAN NATURAL GAS
PIPELINE PROPOSAL

REFS: A) ANKARA 729; B) CAIRO 2119; C) TEHRAN 2058

1. SUMMARY: MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) OFFICIAL MADE
STRONG PLEA FOR US SUPPORT FOR CHOICE OF ROUTE THROUGH TURKEY
FOR US-BELGIAN CONSORTIUM'S NATURAL GAS PIPELINE PROJECT. END
SUMMARY.

2. NURES, MFA (DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BILATERAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS),
INVITED ECONOMIC COUNSELOR TO CALL ON HIM MARCH 7. NURES
SAID GOT HAD RECEIVED REPORT FROM TURKISH EMBASSY CAIRO
THAT BELGIAN-AMERICAN CONSORTIUM REPRESENTATIVES HAD BEEN
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 01878 071557Z

IN CAIRO TO DISCUSS ROUTING OF LNG TANKERS THROUGH SUEZ CANAL

IF US EMBASSY ANKARA HAD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION. ECON COUNSELOR SAID EMBASSY ANKARA HAD RECEIVED SIMILAR INFORMATION BUT COULD NOT ADD ANYTHING TO WHAT NURES ALREADY KNEW.

3. NURES SAID ENERGY SUPPLY IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO GOT. THEREFORE, GOT IS MOST INTERESTED IN HAVING THE IRANIAN NATURAL GAS PIPELINE PASS THROUGH TURKEY TO A LIQUEFACTION PLANT ON TURKEY'S MEDITERRANEAN COAST. ECONOMIC COUNSELOR SAID HE HAD CLEARLY GOT THAT IMPRESSION WHEN CON-SORTIUM REPRESENTATIVES HAD TALKS WITH TURKISH OFFICIALS LAST YEAR. FURTHERMORE, FOREIGN MINISTER ESENBEL HAD EXPRESSED GOT STRONG INTEREST IN THIS PROJECT TO AMBASSADOR MACOMBER ABOUT SIX WEEKS AGO (REF A). EMBASSY HAD THEN REPORTED THE STRONG GOT INTEREST EXPRESSED BY MR ESENBEL TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND TO US EMBASSIES BRUSSELS AND TEHRAN SO THAT GOT VIEWS COULD BE MADE KNOWN INFORMALLY TO OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES AS OCCASION MIGHT BE PRESENTED. ECON COUNSELOR SAID, HOWEVER, THIS IS MATTER INVOLVING PRIVATE FIRMS IN BELGIUM AND US WHO MUST MAKE DECISION IN LIGHT OF ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY OF VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS AND WHO MUST ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT THEY CAN MAKE WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS THAT MAY BE CONCERNED. IN SUCH CASES, USG HAS VERY LITTLE ABILITY TO INFLUENCE DECISION. MOREOVER, ECON COUNSELOR UNDERSTANDS THAT RECOMMENDATION BY FIRMS IN THIS CASE IS SUBJECT TO FINAL APPROVAL BY IRANIAN AUTHORITIES AND HE BELIEVES GOI IS INCLINED TO PREFER ALTERNATIVE WITH LIQUEFACTION PLANT LOCATED IN IRAN. NURES SAID HE UNDERSTANDS FULLY THAT THESE ARE INDEED FACTORS IN THIS CASE.

4. HOWEVER, NURES SAID, MATTER IS APPROACHING TIME FOR DECISION AND GOT WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING USG CAN DO TO ENCOURAGE DECISION TO CHOOSE ROUTE THROUGH TURKEY. CHOICE OF LIQUEFACTION PLANT IN IRAN WOULD DEPEND ON ROUTING OF LNG TANKERS THROUGH SUEZ CANAL. THIS WOULD INVOLVE RISKS IN YEARS AHEAD OF DEPENDENCE ON ROUTE THROUGH EXTREMELY TROUBLED AREA THAT COULD LEAD TO INTERRUPTION OF LNG DELIVERIES. GOT OF COURSE STRONGLY FAVORS ANYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO BRING PEACE TO THE AREA, BUT THE RISKS OF TROUBLE ARE HIGH. MOREOVER, THE ROUTE THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL ALSO REQUIRES PASSAGE THROUGH THE INDIAN OCEAN WHERE THE SOVIET FLEET IS STRONGLY DEPLOYED. THIS WOULD PRESENT

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 01878 071557Z

ADDITIONAL POSSIBILITIES OF INTERRUPTION OF LNG ROUTE IF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION SHOULD WORSEN. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ROUTE ACROSS TURKEY OFFERS MUCH GREATER SECURITY. IRAN AND TURKEY HAVE A STRONG AND STABLE FRIENDSHIP THAT NEITHER COUNTRY WOULD ALLOW TO BE DISTURBED. LIQUEFACTION PLANT ON THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST OF TURKEY OFFERS GREATER SECURITY TO A POINT MUCH CLOSER TO WESTERN EUROPE AND THE US, THE TWO DESTINATIONS FOR THE LNG TANKERS. NURES SAID THE USG DOES HAVE AN INTEREST IN

THE SECURITY OF THE PIPELINE ROUTE BOTH BECAUSE A US FIRM WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT AND BECAUSE HALF THE LNG WILL BE DESTINED FOR THE US. THEREFORE HE HOPED THE USG WOULD IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH CONSORTIUM MEMBERS OR THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT MAKE CLEAR ITS VIEWS ON THE GREATER SECURITY OF THE ROUTE ACROSS TURKEY.

5. ECON COUNSELOR SAID USG, AND SECRETARY KISSINGER IN PARTICULAR, HAVE MADE GREAT EFFORTS TO HELP WORK OUT PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN MIDDLE EAST. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE EXTREMELY AWKWARD FOR USG AT THIS TIME TO BE EXPRESSING DOUBTS ABOUT STABILITY AND SECURITY OF ROUTE THROUGH SUEZ CANAL IN NEXT FEW YEARS. HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WOULD INFORM DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND US EMBASSIES IN COUNTRIES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN ASPECTS OF THIS PROJECT OF THIS FURTHER EXPRESSION OF STRONG INTEREST OF GOT IN HAVING ROUTE GO ACROSS TURKEY. SAID HE ASSUMED GOT IS MAKING OWN REPRESENTATIONS TO GOI. NURES SAID GOT HAS EXPRESSED ITS VIEWS TO GOI IN PAST, AND THIS SUBJECT WILL BE MAJOR TOPIC TO BE RAISED DURING VISIT OF TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER ESENBEL TO TEHRAN MARCH 11-15. HOWEVER, SUBJECT OF PIPELINE MIGHT BE MENTIONED INFORMALLY IN CONVERSATIONS WITH US OFFICIALS IN TEHRAN. THEREFORE GOT THINKS IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF US OFFICIALS WERE AWARE OF STRONG TURKISH INTEREST IN PROJECT AND MIGHT MENTION THIS AS APPROPRIATE. ECON COUNSELOR SAID EMBASSY ANKARA WOULD BE HAPPY AGAIN TO REPORT GOT VIEWS FOR INFORMATION OF DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND EMBASSIES IN INTERESTED COUNTRIES. NURES SAID HE UNDERSTANDS THAT RUHRGAS MAY POSSIBLY JOIN WITH US-BELGIAN CONSORTIUM. THEREFORE IT MIGHT BE USEFUL IF EMBASSY ANKARA WOULD ALSO INFORM US EMBASSY BONN OF GOT INTEREST.

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